



EAST ORANGE BOARD OF HEALTH
REGULAR MEETING
East Orange Department of Health & Human Services
143 New Street East Orange, New Jersey 07017
February 21, 2023

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Call to Order – 5:36 PM

Board Pres. Christine Harris read the following **Sunshine Law**: This meeting, which conforms to the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter **231**, and Public Law of **1975**, is a regular meeting of the City of East Orange Board of Health. Notices have been filed with our official newspaper, with the City Clerk, and posted on regular bulletin boards. The public is permitted to participate at this meeting.

Zoom Communication ID: 827 5386 6042

Meeting Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82753866042?pwd=amNoWjkzRmJjVVNlbDRwVmhh1TG44QT09>

After the roll call, it was determined there was a quorum to convene the meeting.

Board Members Present:

Christine Harris, Pres.
Tobbia M. Corbitt, Vice Pres.
Deanna Phillips
Angela Jones-Williams - absent
Dr. Tonya X. Cook

Council Liaison:

Mustafa Al-M. Brent - absent

Board of Health Counsel:

Attorney Javonna Baker

Health Department Staff:

Yvonne Blake, Acting HHS Director
Lia Hodges - absent on medical leave

Mayoral Staff:

Jada Braime-Butler

Guests:

None

Public in attendance:

None



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**Approval of January 17, 2023, Meeting Minutes:
Approved Unanimously**

Director Blake/Updates:

OSHA Air Quality Report

Pres. Harris asked Dir. Blake for a copy of the OSHA report. Dir. Blake stated she had not received the report. Pres. Harris remarked that the item would remain on the agenda until the Board receives the report.

Vacant Positions

Pres. Harris asked if they had performed any interviews or received any resumes for the Health Department vacancies (grant coordinator, director, or health officer.) Dir. Blake shared that the Administration has decided to pause hiring for those positions until we fix the internal issues. Pres. Harris remarked that we need a health officer and that the internal issues shouldn't circumvent the search for those positions. Dr. Cook concurred with the importance and absolute need of acquiring a full-time HO. Pres. Harris asked Jada if the Mayor had received any resumes for the HO or directorship vacancies. Jada stated not to her knowledge but that she would follow up with his secretary.

Pres. Harris asked if there were any salary adjustments to make the positions more attractive. Dir. Blake stated not at the moment. We are currently preparing for our budget hearings and will revisit it at a later time.

Grants

Pres. Harris asked who was managing the grants. Dir. Blake shared that she has a meeting with the consultant the City utilizes to help manage the grants later that week. Dir. Blake also stated that Essex County Regional would be offering assistance to complete the Strengthening Grant.

Pres. Harris asked if Lia had compiled the spreadsheet for the grants as requested by the Board. Dir. Blake stated she still needed to receive a copy of the spreadsheet. Dir. Blake stated she has spoken with the Business Administrator, who will assist her in identifying those grants, their descriptions, our responsibility, the reporting times, and how much the grants are. Dir. Blake provided the Board with an overview of the grants for the department but will provide an update after speaking with the B.A. Dir. Blake shared that she has staff who are currently assisting her with organizing the information in Lia's absence.

Relocation

Pres. Harris asked if there were any additional issues with the roof or leakage in the building. Dir. Blake stated there are no additional issues, but there are still talks of relocation. The



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administration is working diligently on getting the old police department building up and running for us.

Health Officer Updates:

Grants

H.O. Vincent DeFilippo shared that he is working with Dir. Blake to finalize the NACCHO grant, which entails the HD infrastructure and is provided by the Health Officer's Association and the Strengthening grant derived during COVID. The Strengthening grant is essential as COVID restrictions were lifted. The grants total over \$900,000 in funding for the HD if granted. Dr. Cook asked if both grants were in good standing. HO DeFilippo stated that we are in the process of applying for both grants. The NACCHO grant is being tweaked. A member of the East Orange community will be assisting us with completing the grant, as her expertise will significantly contribute when applying for the grant. We hope to get a commitment by the end of the week to receive funding for this year and next. We will meet with Essex County Regional staff to ensure the Strengthening grant is appropriately completed.

COVID-19

HO DeFilippo stated that our COVID cases are low. Hospital admissions are at 14%, ICU stays are down, and only 9% of people are on ventilators. Last week, the seven-day average in New Jersey was a little over 650 people a week who had COVID and ten deaths. Pres. Harris asked if it was still necessary to wear masks. HO DeFilippo stated that COVID is still present with varying strands, and mask-wearing is required in municipal buildings. Pres. Harris asked, and Mr. DeFilippo stated he began his career as an inspector and has been the HO in Orange Township for approximately 12 years.

Lead Hazard Control & Health Homes (LHCHH) Updates:

Program Coordinator Introduction

Dir. Blake shared that Rahsaan Salaam of the Lead Hazard Control & Healthy Homes (LHCHH) Program would like to petition the BOH for assistance. He has been the program manager overseeing program operations and grant for approximately two years.

Mr. Salaam shared that the LHCHH Program was awarded \$3.6 million in April 2019. This grant cycle runs through September 2023, and we were granted an extension roughly in October 2022. We have been charged with completing 35 abatements on or before September 16th.

E.O. School District Presentation

Mr. Salaam stated he needs help from the Board of Education to obtain a platform in the schools to present to the assembly and the E.O. School District faculty. The presentation would be for children under six and their parents, as this is the grant target age group.

Mr. Salaam shared that he had a preliminary conversation with Ms. Santos, who is in charge of the nurses for the school board; however, there has yet to be any other movement. Pres.



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Harris asked if Mr. Salaam had spoken with the superintendent of the schools. Mr. Salaam stated he has not, but he believes the Mayor had a conversation with him. Dir. Blake shared that Councilman Brent contacted the superintendent, who provided Ms. Santos' contact info. Trustee Phillips stated that Ms. Santos is extremely busy but asked Mr. Salaam for his contact information, and she would facilitate an introduction.

Pres. Harris asked Mr. Salaam if the Mayor was aware of his efforts. Mr. Salaam stated that he was. Pres. Harris suggested a formal email be sent to all concerned parties, including the Mayor, Councilman Brent, and the council representing the school ward. The email should specify the request as a follow-up so you can have a trail. Doing so will help to expedite getting you into the school for the presentation.

Lead Hazard Control Program Overview

Vice-Pres. Corbitt asked for clarity on the nature of the program. Mr. Salaam explained that money had been awarded to the City of East Orange to help homeowners and tenants remediate lead burdens for children who have tested positive for an elevated blood level (EBL); three consecutive readings of 14 through 19 dcl in the blood.

Once that happens, an inspection occurs. A nurse is also dispatched to handle the medical caseload, but the inspector handles the environmental side. After the initial inspection, if lead violations are found, that information comes to my office. At that particular juncture, the homeowner is given a notice of violation that includes all the violations found in the home.

They're also given a license-certified contractor's list from the State of New Jersey with an application for the grant. We assist them through the application process, and then we can remediate those lead burdens at no cost to the homeowner. We also help pregnant women. The grant requires that 80 to 85% of those homes must have a child with an EBL. Only 10% of the homes do not require a child with an EBL to reside in them.

Pres. Harris asked what prompted testing. Mr. Salaam stated there are two ways an inspection is garnered—first, an individual contacts the Health Department because of chipping or peeling paint. The second way is the child test positive for lead by a doctor. That information goes to a system to which every state health department has access. So, the children in your City's municipalities will be in your system.

Pres. Harris asked if the grant included chelation for children with high blood levels. Mr. Salaam stated it does not, but he is unaware if any grants are available for chelation. Pres. Harris asked if the documents they received were the application process for getting the abatement and testing. Mr. Salaam remarked yes. Pres. Harris asked if Mr. Salaam was the coordinator for multiple municipalities. Mr. Salaam stated that his program covers 13 municipalities.



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Pres. Harris asked if there were any other details the Board needed to know. Mr. Salaam stated the two most important factors are elevated blood levels in the child and economic qualification. The maximum salary per household is \$74,500. The income is calculated for everyone 18 or older residing in the home. Pres. Harris asked about the average cost of an abatement for an apartment or a home. Mr. Salaam remarked \$15,000.

Chief REHS Updates:

Food Trucks

Mr. Henry shared that at the last BOH meeting, we solicited the assistance of the Mayor to ensure that no new food truck applications were taken. Three weeks ago, there was an operation to move the food trucks to a central location. We also met with Mr. Tony Jackson and the Mayor to facilitate the creation of zones whereby all food trucks will operate in specific locations along Central Avenue with minimal effect on the brick-and-mortar businesses. We do not want food trucks impeding the brick-and-mortar store's ability to make a profit. So, we are monitoring how well that works rather than banning them from East Orange altogether.

Inspections

Mr. Henry shared that they are continuing the inspections and advised the three operators that they will be inspected twice a year. Mr. Henry shared that there are some clusters of complaints regarding bedbugs, rodents, and mold. If we can identify clusters, we can develop programs to remediate these issues. We also want to meet with some of the managers and operators of these large housing complexes to inform them of the types of resident complaints. We can then create a game plan to remediate and create a healthy environment for residents.

Open Discussion:

Board of Health Appointment

Pres. Harris asked Jada about the opening on the Board for representation from the 5th Ward. Jada stated that the Mayor was aware and that she would remind him tomorrow.

Mayor's Town Hall

VP Corbitt said she received notification that the Mayor would host another town hall featuring Dir. Blake and Mr. Salaam. As suggested at the last Health & Education meeting, the town hall will facilitate a discussion regarding the Lead Hazard program. VP Corbitt remarked that this is an excellent format to bring awareness and assist with getting the School District on board.

At the conclusion of Board business, Pres. Harris adjourned the meeting at 6:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jo-Ann Lowe

City of East Orange

NEW JERSEY



Board Clerk

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